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Unitarians and Public Questions

THE ISSUES

A Report of the special meeting held on Public Questions, held in the evening of April 26th during the annual meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in London.

Other reports follow in this issue.

ANTI-SEMITISM, the colour bar, mental health and nuclear disarmament—these were the challenging problems with which resolutions at the session on "Public Issues" were concerned. There was a large attendance of ministers and lay folk and it was obvious that there was deep feeling on the various issues and a concern that upon them Unitarian opinion should be expressed with no uncertain voice.

Anti-Semitism

The Rev. Peter Godfrey (Swinton) moved the resolution dealing with anti-semitism and the colour bar. Recent happenings at Sharpeville, he urged, had caused a shudder of horror throughout the world. Things for which Unitarians stood were being challenged. There was need to "gird up our loins". Unitarians had a record second to none in upholding equal rights for others and in affirming the worth of human personality. We were conscious too of our debt to the ethical monotheism of Judaism and to other religions and other races. The myth had to be exploded that the Jews were a separate race or that the coloured races were inferior. If any of us had such feelings it meant that the spirit of the swastika was in our hearts. Race discrimination and hatred were nourished by ignorance. The way to overcome them was by building up better personal relationships.

Rabbi I. Levy, Chaplain to H.M. Forces, seconded the resolution and was given a warm greeting on rising to speak. It was, he declared, a privilege to participate in the Assembly discussion. The causes of anti-semitism and colour bar prejudices were attributed to politics, economics and social and historic situations. Their consequences were known to us in all their stern, grim realities and were terrifying. Co-existence was not an invention of the Soviets. We had all to learn to live with one another. The world was rapidly contracting. Distances were losing their significance. The need was to try to understand the differences which led to divisions. The tragedy was that appalling ignorance bred intolerance and intolerance was only a short step from hatred. Hatred could quickly develop into violence. The re-appearance of the Swastika was disturbing. It was a symbol creating a feeling of horror. It was the symbol of everything evil in this generation.

"What right had we to deny a place on the earth to another", asked Rabbi Levy? The Earth is the Lord's. We were but tenants on a short lease.

Discussion followed. The Rev. John Gill called for support of the Council for Christians and Jews. There were, he said, many opportunities for us all to welcome today students from Asian countries into our homes. The Rev. George Parkinson thought an occasional interchange of pulpit with a Rabbi was a practical way by which we could stress our common unity. Rev. E. Shirvell Price instanced a recent all faiths service in Bolton in which representatives of the living religions had shared. The Rev. Baker Short mentioned church and synagogue co-operation in his area and thought participation in the annual "people to people week" of the International Friendship League was another way by which practical steps could be taken to implement the spirit of the resolution.

The resolution was approved unanimously.

Mental Health

Following this, the Rev. John Quick from Cheltenham and Gloucester moved a resolution which asked that the General Assembly Council examine the question whether the pastoral role of the ministry in modern times should include an understanding of and work with cases of mental ill health as a natural part of the "cure of souls" and whether training for this purpose should be included in the training of the minister and what the nature of such training should be.

Mr. Quick began by referring to the last ministers' conference at Great Hucklow where he said this question had been brought up and where it was found ministers were calling for the first time of "the cure of souls". He had been astonished to learn of the achievements in this field in the United States. At a more recent refresher course at Manchester College the

question had come up again. At the present time ministers needed to be trained for the cure of souls. The previous day Mr. Birtles had spoken of the joy found in serving in the ministry and how some men were solving their financial problem by going outside for training and service. This was what was happening. In many cases ministers felt themselves hopelessly inadequate to help the mentally sick who sought their aid. He had been told by older ministers "Experience will teach you how to deal with people". "But," he asked, "what of those who suffer while we are being trained?" He had recently had a case of a woman who had sought his help and who had made two attempts to commit suicide.

"When people come to me for help not because I am a minister but because I am a counsellor it makes me feel ashamed", said Mr. Quirk, and leads me to move this resolution.

He was supported by Rev. H. Stewart Carter. Mr. Carter said that as he came into the hall he had been asked by a college student, "What is behind this resolution?" He could speak only for himself and say that behind his seconding the resolution was his twelve years' ministry in Cambridge where he had found again and again that the function and role of the minister was being broadened for a field of service in which he lacked training. He had found himself endeavouring to give help and feeling a sense of failure. Inexperience might have caused him to have done damage to personality.

"My experience", Mr. Carter continued, "is that psychiatrists are sending cases to me to deal with where there is a religious background". This kind of thing was happening because psychiatrists were not always religious in their own outlook and felt that in such cases a minister was best fitted to give help. He believed that the minister who could help best was one who had a free, open and undogmatic mind. It was such who could give the greatest sympathy and exercise the the widest understanding.

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An interesting discussion followed. A college student felt all ministers should be analysed. He did not think it was possible for anyone to help another until he understood himself. He felt there was a need for our theologians to study the problem of original sin and the nature of man. Underneath the doctrine there was something with which we had come to terms.

Principal Gerrard thought that if students were encouraged to take up a special course in psychology a dangerous situation might arise in which they later set up as an amateur seeking to give help and thus become detracted from their major role. He felt that if a man had a call for such service it was better that he take a full training course before he entered upon his theological studies. His view was that the task of the colleges was that of helping men to gain a positive and rational religious faith. Rev. A. H. Birtles, who combines his ministerial service with work as a counsellor, said that he was aware of the difficulties. But he felt it would be a pity if the resolution was turned down because of these. The resolution was carried.

Population Control

Dr. Tony Wrigley moved a resolution dealing with war on want and population control. It was common knowledge, he said, that in recent years birth and death rates had declined in this country. There had been great advances in medical knowledge and in hygiene and such matters. We could expect to live twice as long as our great-grandfathers lived. But in Asia and African countries the problem was serious. Death rates had dropped, but birth rates were unchanged. Great work had been done by such efforts as the U.N. anti-malaria campaign and by the provision of clinics which helped in lowering the infantile mortality rate. If the present situation in these countries continued a population increase of two to three per cent was likely. The need was for this country to assist in making contraceptive techniques known and also by making available capital resources which would help raise the standards of living and make educational facilities more widespread. A sense of urgency had to be generated. What was possible for us to do now might be impossible in ten years' time.

The Rev. Tom Wardle described scenes he had witnessed as a serving soldier in Indonesia. He spoke of the sight of people dying in the streets in Bombay and Calcutta. A knowledge of contraceptives would help, but we could also arouse further support at once for the war on want which was being waged by the U.N. and voluntary agencies. An important aspect of the work for peace was the war on want. The resolution was carried.

Nuclear Disarmament

The final resolution was concerned with problems of nuclear disarmament. Here, as was to be expected in such an assembly, there were deep divisions of opinion. There were moving and reasoned speeches from both angles and finally the resolution was carried by 160 votes to 46. Mr. Harold Steele of Malvern opened the discussion on this resolution by citing an utterance of Commander King-Hall who had pointed out that the plain fact was that mankind was on the edge of irreparable disaster. In the past when tensions broke there was possibility of recovery. Where nuclear warfare was concerned recovery was unimaginable. Our nation must say that it would contract out of this imbecility. U.S.A. situation had said that all-out nuclear war was not only possible but probable. There was the dreadful thought that the thing might go off by a fluke. There was the danger of a mechanical error.

In his support of the resolution, the Rev. J. Blackburn of Plymouth referred to the recent *Inquirer* editorial which he said was evidence of an emotional outburst. The supporters of the resolution had been accused of dogmatism, but it was his view that the editorial itself disclosed a much more rigid dogmatism. When they declared in the resolution that weapons of war were contrary to the will of God and an obstacle to the concord of man they meant this. They had to be guided by principles and not by political expediency. What was morally wrong could not be politically right. It had been said that the resolution was calling for unilateral disarmament. It meant this country would be going into it alone. "Why not alone", he asked? We did with the slave trade. Everyone then was waiting for someone else. He believed that if Great Britain gave the moral lead history would repeat itself in this matter. A new situation of hope and confidence would be created.

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The Rev. Reece Walker felt that the whole situation could be summed up in the words Channing used about slavery—"This is wrong". The Rev. E. G. Lee said that he felt equally sincerely that this was wrong. He felt as desperately about the tragic situation as did the supporters of the resolution. But if he was to be true to his own integrity he could not support a resolution aiming at unilateral disarmament. It meant breaking at once any alliance we had with European countries and with the U.S.A. If we were unilaterally to disarm would anyone assert that America would follow? We all knew what American public opinion was like. Such action as the resolution called for might easily increase the disaster which threatened. He would vote against the resolution.

Mr. C. L. Wykes of Leicester felt the wrong resolution was before the meeting. What he felt we had to work for was not just nuclear disarmament, but the abolition of all forms of warfare. The banning of nuclear warfare might accentuate the dangers of conventional warfare. The Rev. Elspeth Wallace felt that those who spoke against the resolution in their hearts knew the H-bomb was wrong. The issue was confused if the issue Mr. Wykes had raised was brought in. The H-bomb was imperilling civilisation. Ivan Knowlson, who had participated in the Aldermaston march, said that this country had, it seemed to him, always wanted an enemy. In the past it had been Spain, Stuttgard, France. These were now our friends. Since world war two it had seemed the same thing had happened. We had entered into N.A.T.O. whose forces were aimed at Russia. It was an attitude which was ignorant. He had Russian grandparents and was proud of them. He knew Russians as persons and knew that they were much like other people. An amend the resolution was carried by 160 to 46.

MORALITY AND YOUTH

A NEW KIND OF MEETING

A NEW technique was introduced to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches at the meeting held on Thursday evening, April 21. Announced as a "face-to-face" interview, the meeting was opened by a bare announcement by Mr. Mark James, who told a crowded audience in the Martineau Hall that the Rev. A. H. Birtles would be questioned about morality by Mr. David Milne.

The questioning started quietly enough, with efforts to establish definitions and first principles. Mr. Birtles admitted that he was not an expert, nor a man with any deeply specialised knowledge. As a minister, as a father, and as a marriage guidance counsellor, however, he was deeply interested in the practical issues.

"What," asked Mr. Milne, "do you understand by private morality?"

Mr. Birtles thoughtfully replied: "There is a public morality—a general conception of what is right and what is wrong. This public morality is sometimes Christian, even among those who would not go to church or think of themselves as Christian believers. But there are also private moralities, which may differ in some details from the public morality—these private moralities may deal with stealing, with apparently simple matters like dodging the paying of bus fares; or they may go deeper into such things as sex morality."

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Soon the two contributors to the discussion were deeply engaged in what became an argument about moral and emotional maturity. Mr. Birtles raised the first real laugh of the evening when he admitted that he had not the faintest idea of what moral maturity really meant—though the way in which the discussion developed seemed to indicate that he really understood this better than he was at first inclined to admit. Mr. Milne suggested that part of maturity must mean a breaking away from mass morality, a breaking away from the bonds of the home, a beginning by a young man or woman at the effort towards individual thinking on moral problems; with this suggestion Mr. Birtles cordially agreed. It was, he thought, a perfectly natural process, not unlike the way in which a fledgling bird must leave the nest of its parents.

"But if," Mr. Milne objected, "parents cling on to adolescent sons or daughters, as they sometimes do, is it moral for others to help the young people to break away from the influence of their parents?"

Mr. Birtles reacted to this with some violence. "No one has any *right* to interfere between a young person and his or her parents" he said. "This includes the fact that no one has any right to encourage a youngster to revolt against the will of his parents."

The problems of what the psychologists would call mother or father fixation next came under the microscope of question and answer, but soon the matter of individual and group morality came back.

"If," asked Mr. Milne, "someone has developed an individual morality of his own, should he push it on to other people?"

"No," said the minister. "None of us has the right to impose our thinking on anybody else—and this includes a moral standard. The whole process of education should be a development of things from within the personality, and not the pushing of such things from any outside source."

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

This was the end of the first part of the series of questions and answers. It was obvious that general principles were difficult to argue—and Mr. Milne switched the questioning to the more practical problems of marriage. He first encouraged Mr. Birtles to set out what he regarded as the purposes of marriage—which Mr. Birtles stated as the procreation of children and the enabling of men and women to express their instincts naturally and to reach complete fulfilment of personality. "In our society," Mr. Birtles stated, "this can be done only through monogamous marriage".

"Tie ourselves to one person for life: Mr. Milne exclaimed amid laughter in the audience. "What a step to take! Are we serious enough in preparation for such a step?"

Mr. Birtles agreed that preparation was often not serious enough. He felt that small groups of engaged couples with a leader to guide their discussions might find themselves working out answers to many of the urgent questions—even such apparently minor ones as "Who is to be the boss in the home?" On such questions marriages often foundered. This led to a long argument (in which, later, some of the audience, young and old, joined) as to how a lifelong partner could be chosen, and as to how real love might be distinguished from pure infatuation. "To recognise that you are in love is not something with an intellectual basis," Mr. Birtles said. "It is something that you just *know*."

NEXT WEEK

There will be a special Illustrated General Assembly Supplement, making another twelve-page issue.

One member of the audience suggested that the distinction between love and infatuation is a matter of the length of time that it lasts. "Wait," she said, "for three months. If it is a pure infatuation it will have disappeared; if it is real love, it will have got stronger."

SEXUAL MORALITY IN CALIFORNIA

The most startling part of the meeting, however, came from an apparently harmless question about the moral influence of film-stars—the sugary romance of their films and the seediness of their private lives. It so happened that there was in the audience a young lady from California; and she electrified the audience by her description of the sexual morals of American boys and girls in their high-school years, when it was almost taken for granted that sexual behaviour which would horrify many parents was quite normal among the "teen-agers".

In commenting on this Mr. Birtles said that we had to admit that in some respects morals were in the melting-pot; we were living in an age of transition—but every age was in some ways an age of transition. "It is not of the slightest use," he said, "telling a young person: 'This thing is wrong, it is immoral, it is against the ideas of the Church'. You have to be more constructive. You have to point out that immoral behaviour usually involves unjust exploitation of the woman concerned, and later in life will make fidelity in marriage much more difficult".

The American girl agreed with this. Those who had been most outspoken about their sex-life in American schools were those who found themselves most emotionally toppled when, as usually happened, their partners left them high and dry. It was, she thought, very difficult to persuade parents to realise that these matters were worrying their sons and daughters. An older lady in the audience, a mental welfare worker, supported this.

"DOING EMOTIONAL DAMAGE"

At this point, Mr. Birtles could almost sit back and let members of the audience take over. Mr. Martin Davies pointed out that it was very difficult for those who had got beyond the "teen-age" stage of development, even by only a few years, to recall how they had felt not long before. The Rev. Tom Wardle raised an enthusiastic response when he pointed out that many of those who tried to break away from accepted sex morality did emotional damage to their partners and to themselves. Behaviour which did emotional damage to others was immoral. "Our society", he said, "has become more and more depersonalised; individuals have very few outlets for their individuality. To many people it seems that only in sexual matters does the person really get a chance to get away from such mass thinking and mass behaviour as is impressed on him in work and in most of his leisure. We should, therefore, beware of too easy condemnation".

A Canadian in the audience asked if we did not fail to stress sufficiently strongly the fundamental belief in the dignity of man; this might sound vague, but Unitarianism and all worthwhile religion should make it clear that one of our tasks was to enable young people to build a protection around themselves, to develop a real belief in themselves and in those whom they were to marry.

Mr. Birtles, in summarising what had emerged from the discussion, pointed out that many of the problems which seemed still to be worrying many young people, really stemmed from the faulty relationship between parents and children. "Really," he said, "the worries emerge when an adolescent realises that his parents cannot solve all his problems for him—that he has to face the same problems as they have faced, and think his way through."

"The question," said Mr. Milne seriously," has only just begun, though our meeting is finishing. We have, somehow, to close the gap between the generations".

Young and old among the audience echoed that remark—and the new President, Mr. A. L. Blake, was clearly expressing the feelings of all present when he thanked the speakers and the contributors from the floor of the hall, who had made it such a notably interesting evening.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

MORNING SESSION

ON the dot of ten o'clock delegates burst into song with their opening hymn, "Come, let us join with faithful souls our song of faith to sing", and then after short prayer they proceeded to their official business.

First the thanks of the Assembly to the retiring President, the Rev. A. W. Vallance, voiced by Dr. F. T. Wood, for discharging his "honorary, honourable and onerous" task, and combining it with his own pulpit responsibilities as only a "superman" could.

Then the election of the new President, Mr. A. L. Blake, introduced by the Rev. J. W. Maw, as an "honoured and dedicated Unitarian from the West Country, one to whom the travelling involved in the Presidency would be a light matter compared with his regular visits to his sheep farm in Patagonia".

The new President gave his address, the Rev. J. H. Smith was elected Vice-President and after the unanimous acceptance of a new Standing Order for the better control and organisation of Resolutions at Annual Business Meetings, the Secretary of the General Assembly, the Rev. J. Kirby, presented the Council's Thirty-Second Annual Report, and drew particular attention to the shortage of Ministers. It was the smallest-ever number of Ministers on the role, 160 for 313 churches. "If you, the churches, do not provide students, where are they to come from?" he asked.

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The Hon. Treasurer submitted the accounts, and emphasised that ten guineas a week spent on publicity was a trifling sum, that many more churches could use the Simplex Envelope Scheme which had always provided an increase in income, and that he had budgeted for a deficit of £1,500 for the next year. "If 20,000 Unitarians sacrificed the cost of one cigarette a week, it would double the G.A.'s income", he concluded.

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The delegates then began their annual ritual of speaking their mind on any part of the Council's work they chose. The following were among the points raised:

Question: Why was the G.A. Appeal Fund not spent long ago, in accordance with the original intentions?
Answer: The G.A. now depended on it for regular income.
Question: Why not call the Simplex scheme the "complex" scheme?
Answer: It only needs one level-headed person in a congregation to make it work easily.
Question: Why can't we produce something with a more consistent theological outlook than "Essays in Unitarian Theology"?
Answer: The matter will be looked into.
Question: What views did our representatives express to the Home Office on A.I.D.?
Answer: A representative variety of views, and the copies were now exhausted.
Question: Our future growth depends on publicity and the creation of fellowships. Why not a full-time field worker?
Answer: A wonderful idea, but no funds.
Question: Why does not the label "Unitarian" appear more prominently on some of our notice-boards?
Answer: Some of you are still sitting at the feet of Martineau and licking his boots.
Question: Does not the notion of Ministers as servants of the General Assembly cut across their contracts with their own congregations?
Answer: No. It is only a larger conception of their function.
Question: Why do not we ministers stimulate recruitment by telling of our joy in our work?
Answer: What joy do minister's *wives* find keeping house and family under the present salary scales?
Question: Who are the ministers who have influenced the present students for the ministry to be in our colleges?
Answer: Their fewness would be too embarrassing to reveal.

Plea from the Essex Hall Bookshop: When in London get your "whodunits" from us not the station bookstalls.

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The meeting closed with inspiring words and greetings from the A.U.A. brought by Dr. Dana Greeley, on how our common religious quest united us all in despite of national barriers. Greetings were then sent to Kindred Churches and Societies Abroad, and the delegates hastened off to their well-earned lunches.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION

THANKS to the evening meeting to discuss problems of public importance, the afternoon session was less heavily loaded than in some years; the ministers and delegates were thus able to give more consideration to the matters to be dealt with. The first item was the proposed alteration of the bye-laws, to make provision for new "Fellowships" as well as new Churches. Fellowships, it was stated, must have at least fifteen members, and must meet at least twice a month; Churches had to have thirty members, and had to have met for worship regularly for three years, before applying to be put on the General Assembly's

Roll. The Rev. John Kielty, explaining all this, stated that a number of Fellowships had already been formed; some of them might eventually become Churches; some of them might never wish to do so; but the position had to be regularised; the Council had therefore adopted the new bye-laws; the Meeting could not alter the wording which had been adopted, but the Council would welcome discussion.

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This discussion showed varying points of view. Dr. Green of Ditchling thought the numbers suggested (fifteen members for a Fellowship, thirty for a Church) too large. The Rev. Bruce Findlow was slightly alarmed at the fact that the new bye-law stated that a new Church would have to bind itself in advance to accepting (in the important matter of appointing a minister) the ruling of the General Assembly or the District Association. Mr. Kielty said that this was not an effort to ride a steam-roller over local autonomy; it was a matter of ensuring that a single new Church should not be able to wreck any grouping or sharing scheme which might be evolved by the General Assembly or a District Association.

This led, by a kind of natural sequence, to Mr. Kielty's progress report on the matter of groupings, and of ministerial stipends, which had been raised at last year's meetings in Leeds. The Secretary said that visits had now been paid to a number of District Associations, and information had been obtained as to what grouping and sharing schemes were in operation. The first and most striking one was in North and East Lancashire. "Lancashire", Mr. Kielty said amid laughter, "is not so obstinate as not to know a good thing." A meeting had been held in Bolton, following last year's Leeds meetings, to which every church in the area was asked to send two lay representatives, as well as its minister. Results were already forthcoming. In the Bolton area, two ministers now shared the oversight of a small church which was without its own minister; there were in effect three ministers who were shared by five congregations. Horwich and Walmsley, the smaller churches, were much helped by the bigger congregations, and members of the various churches were getting to know each other better. In some cases District Association boundaries were being crossed; St. Helens was now working with Park Lane and Warrington, one of these two being in the Liverpool District and one in North-East Lancs.

On the related matter of stipends, Mr. Kielty said that only about a hundred churches had yet replied to his recent inquiry, which meant that information was not yet complete. There was, however, a Committee of Laymen which was now trying the necessary information. This Lay Committee's report would eventually come before the General Assembly. The gathering had listened intently to what had been said; questions were few. It was clear that this was only an interim report, and final details would have to be awaited at a later time.

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Then there came two motions put forward by congregations, the first, proposed by the Rev. Keith Treacher, from Golders Green. It asked the Council of the General Assembly to work out some machinery by which Unitarian pronouncements on matters of public interest could be made quickly, to meet the face of changing events. Mr. Treacher said that the motion had been put forward because the synagogues of his own area had been daubed with swastikas during an outbreak of anti-semitic feeling, and it had been then impossible to deal with such an issue at all speedily. Unitarians could not even express their sympathy with the unfortunate people of Agadir, since there was not in existence any adequate machinery to issue quick statements. Miss Eileen Kielty, seconding the motion, said it was time that we were able to speak out on matters of ethical importance—"Sharpeville or the Summit Conference do not time themselves to meet our G.A. meetings". "We must," Miss Kielty said, "be true to our ideals, not only as individuals, but as a denomination."

There was no doubt about the interest in this motion. Almost all those who spoke supported the idea—the only difference was on the details of what sort of machinery could be set up. Many liked a suggestion of the Rev. Tom Wardle, who thought that we should have a Committee of Public Witness, empowered to issue statements on behalf of the Churches as a whole. The Rev. A. W. Vallance considered that this was the solution, but the Rev. L. Baker Short thought it might be helpful to find out how other denominations met this problem. The motion, asking the G.A. Council to work out some system of this kind, was passed with acclamation, only four delegates voting against it.

The last motion, put forward by Mrs. Mason of Gorton, Manchester, was very different. This suggested that we spent too much time on matters of public importance, and not enough time on the domestic affairs of our Churches. Mrs. Mason said that her Committee (all men) had proposed that this motion should be put forward; she did not entirely agree with its wording, though she was officially proposing it. Mrs. Sutton seconded the motion without comment. It soon became obvious that the motion did not have the sympathy of the delegates, and the proposer and seconder asked permission to withdraw it. This was accordingly done, and the business meeting closed at the surprisingly early hour of four o'clock, half an hour earlier than those planning it had expected.

OTHER MEETINGS

(Further reports will appear next week)

"HIGH INTENT"

Sunday School Association Annual Meeting

"HIGH INTENT" is the title of the year's annual report of the Sunday School Association which was presented at the 126th annual general meeting of the Association at Essex Hall, on Tuesday, April 19th. The title is a quotation from the hymn "City of God" which we sang as part of the opening devotions conducted by Mr. John Wilson.

What is this "High Intent"? There is a seven-point statement about it in the report itself. Briefly, we want to build up our Sunday Schools, for the sake of our children, for the sake of our churches, for the sake of a City of God for all people.

There are some depressing facts to face. We have lost schools at the average rate of two a year over the last fifty years. Many of our churches still give no direct support to denominational Sunday School work. A brilliant president, the Rev. Joyce Hackhurst, retired from office this year: few Unions or schools had asked for a visit from her, and the response to her appeal, through personal letters, for financial assistance to the Sunday School Association and the R.E.Y.D. had been negligible. A keen and capable treasurer, Miss Leonie Hasegawa, had to draw attention, to a fall in the totals of Sunday School subscriptions and Youth Sunday collections compared with the figures of the previous year.

In spite of disappointments Miss Hackhurst had enjoyed her year of office and it was as one who believed in the high importance of her office that she installed, as her successor, Mr. Alex Rogers of Bank Street, Bury.

Mr. Rogers felt diffident about his qualifications for his new post. But was it a post of honour, he asked, and was inclined to be doubtful because so few schools and Unions made nominations for the presidency or for membership of the committee. We were at the beginning of a new decade, and were meeting for the first time in our fine new headquarters. Here were a challenge, and an opportunity. We needed more "know-how": but reasons for this "know-how" were

already available. Not only were there such well-established events as the weekend courses for young people, and the biennial summer School for teachers at Oxford: there had been a weekend residential school for young teachers, organized by the Bury Sunday School Union, and Mr. Rogers was sure that other unions would find such a venture rewarding. The importance of the work demanded more financial support. Could the Assembly give more assistance? Year by year, the annual report set out our needs in plain terms. Could we not have more and increased subscriptions from schools and churches? Could not more private subscribers be recruited?

Costs advance, and numbers retreat. That was why we had launched a campaign of publicity during G.A. week: and leaflets and posters would demonstrate that the committee was well aware of the seriousness of the situation and of the need to reverse the present process of decline. Young and old must adventure together: but to the young must be offered a positive Unitarian faith, the value of which must be clearly shown by the example of officers and teachers. Mr. Rogers stated that if he could help in any way he was prepared to visit churches and district associations not as an expert teacher but, in his capacity of President, to assist in rallying our forces so that we might prosper in the things of the spirit.

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The following were appointed as officers of the Association for the year 1960-61: President-elect, The Rev. Sydney Knight; Retiring President, The Rev. Joyce Hazlehurst; Hon. Treasurer, Miss L. M. Hosegood. Committee: The Rev. Irvin Hodgson; Mr. Ivan Knowlson; Mrs. Rowena Scaife; The Rev. J. Harry Smith; and Mr. John Wilson; together with a representative of the Northern Sunday School Federation.

The retiring officers were thanked for their services: and Mr. O. Furnival-Jones and Mr. Peter Gimson our honorary auditors, were appointed to serve for another year.

The following resolution was moved by the Rev. Sydney Knight, on behalf of the committee:

> "This 126th annual meeting of the Sunday School Association having heard the proposal to appoint an honorary secretary, residing near Manchester, for the Sunday School Work sub-committee of the Religious Education and Youth Department of the General Assembly, agrees that the R.E.Y.D. main committee be empowered to co-opt this secretary as an additional member."

Commenting on the resolution, Mr. Knight explained that the Northern Sunday School Federation had disbanded the Systematic Instruction Committee because its work tended to duplicate that of the Sunday School Work sub-committee of the R.E.Y.D. But this had resulted in the loss of a northern secretary who could assist the R.E.Y.D. secretary as need arose. Therefore it had been proposed to appoint for the R.E.Y.D. sub-committee a voluntary secretary residing within easy reach of Manchester. It was felt that it would assist this new secretary if he or she were given a place on the R.E.Y.D. Committee. For this purpose the number of the R.E.Y.D. Committee would have to be increased by one, and the Assembly Council had approved this step, subject to the agreement of the S.S.A. Hence the present motion. Mr. Henry Tittle seconded, and the motion was carried. The President concluded the meeting with a benediction that was indeed a blessing and an assurance of strength for our tasks.

UNITARIANS & SOUTH AFRICA SIXTY YEARS AGO

The Fate of Anti-Imperialism in Liverpool

> For as long as God is God, and history is history, it is certain that the fate of an Empire is decided when corruption enters into public life, and when prosperity is used in the interest of selfish luxury, instead of being held, with everything that is best, as a sacred and holy trust.

SO SPOKE the octogenarian philanthropist, William Rathbone, in 1899 with reference to the Boer War, and so did Mr. Ian Sellers conclude his vivid account of the struggles of the Liverpool "pro-Boer" minority in his talk to the Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society. Basing his story on contemporary journals and newspapers, and in particular on the William Rathbone letters now available in the Rathbone Collection at Liverpool, Mr. Sellers presented an arresting description of the emotions aroused by an ardent and uncompromising liberal, anti-imperial minority at a time of jingoism and a "my country right or wrong" attitude. While Mr. Sellers communicated his enthusiastic admiration for the stand taken by that small group of "pro-Boer" liberal leaders, it seemed perfectly fitting that he should be outwardly illumined by the spring sunshine streaming through the stained-glass window in Essex Church dedicated to the memory of one of their number, Sir John Brunner.

With local politics dominated at the turn of the century by a Tory oligarchy, firmly cemented to brewery interests, and supported by all the forces of anti-Catholic prejudice, the "pro-Boers" were a highly unpopular minority even in the Liberal Party. Their leaders were with one exception members of either Hope Street or Ullet Road churches, a combination that ensured they were the "best-hated men in town".

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The honourable exception was provided by the Rev. Charles F. Aked (1890-1905), the ex-engineer, £1,000 per annum minister of the now disappeared Pembroke Place Baptist Chapel. Under his generalship and fired by his brilliant oratory and hypnotic personality, the "pro-Boer" party, or as they called themselves, the "South Africa Conciliationists", suffered the contempt and scorn and sometimes open violence usually accorded to unpopular causes. Even though their meetings, with proper discretion, were only open to those invited, the treatment accorded such a cause by press, police and public alike, was a typical example of the unhesitating dilution of democratic principles in times of crisis. "Let them organise a meeting", wrote one newspaper, "the riot that would follow would be worth seeing. Wherefore we dare them to it". And when Captain Nott-Bower, the Chief Constable, threatened that he could not give police protection to such a meeting, the same paper was delighted and claimed that this proved that in the crisis "human nature is greater than the principle of free speech. Thank you, Captain Nott-Bower".

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Fresh heights of excitement were reached in 1901, when Aked denounced the war as "a crime against humanity, a capitalist war, worked up to by a 'kept' press, initiated by treachery and lying". But the "Cowardly War" sermon was his greatest masterpiece. Outside the chapel a crowd of 2,000 was unable to gain admittance; after the sermon, his wife was spat upon, and the windows of their home broken by the mob. The Unitarian-controlled Watch Committee allowed his claim for damages to his property, but so great was the volume of protest to reach the city fathers, that they could only sit dumb-founded when the Council, after a week of debate, flatly reversed the Watch Committee's decision, thereby giving tacit approval to mob-violence.

But, a few months later, the Boer War was over, and some of the leaders of the pro-Boer movement were rapidly vanishing from the public scene. The story, however, reveals the tragic cleavage between the older generation of liberals and the younger, both in local politics and within Unitarianism. Outside Unitarianism on the one hand were the ageing pro-Boer idealists, the remnants of Victorian liberal idealism, and on the other, the younger set, in revolt at the enervating pacifism of their elders, waving the Imperial flag, and cheering the victories of General "Bobs". Within Unitarianism, the young Gregs, Rathbones and Holts were fighting in South Africa, while their fathers upheld the pro-Boer crusade at home.

This talk will subsequently be available in full in the "Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society".

But what the Liverpool Unitarians tried to teach their brethren at this time was no sham pacifism, mock humility or self-righteous indignation. In the words of Richard Acland Armstrong:—

> This military ardour is summer madness, and if we keep our heads steady it will die down in a generation . . . . When it seems that the bright star of the English conscience is for the moment veiled, that she has forgotten the sanctity of her calling, how should we not love her more, be moved to a more faithful service, a more long-suffering patience, a mightier effort that our land may be the home and shrine of truth and righteousness and purity and peace ?

MINISTERS' MEETING

"The Professional Status of the Ministry"

IN VIEW of the low standard of living imposed on the minister and his family, the inability to retire, the economic necessity of non-ministerial part-time work, and of a *working* wife, how was the Unitarian Minister to maintain the professional status necessary for his work ?

To this question Mr. Butler addressed himself in his talk to his brother ministers. Though himself a recent comer to the ranks of the ministry, he knew what professional status meant in his previous walk of life—that of chartered accountant. It meant certain standards of training before admission to the profession, the expectation of a certain attitude from one's clients and a high code of behaviour and professional integrity on the part of the accountant himself.

Apropos of the Unitarian Ministry, the Ministry Committee, he knew, did their utmost to ensure that before acceptance for training an applicant was qualified academically to benefit from his course, had a character and personality fitted for the work, and, especially in view of the standard of living, had the feeling of being "called" to the work. All this was necessary in order to avoid the waste of training resources on potential misfits. In these difficult times, he claimed, it was more necessary than ever that the ministry should not lose standing by the admission of unsuitable candidates. We must be more selective still, he declared, and raise our sights, not lower them.

With regard to the attitude of the laity, he could speak with personal experience having been a layman in ministerial matters for so long. Though congregations seemed often so insensitive to the tight economies practised by the minister's family and necessitated by the salary they deemed appropriate to the office, though they still sometimes grumbled that the minister's wife could not help with the church life not realising the necessity of her working to balance the family budget, though they still made the tacit assumption that it was perfectly fitting for their minister to be living at a lower standard than the average family in the congregation, nevertheless, he believed, they expected a "dedicated" ministry and an "educated" ministry (though not an intellectual minister who talked over their heads). The laity might reject the notion of a Unitarian minister as a "priest" but on many occasions they felt the deepest need for him to do things in his ministerial capacity that they could not do for themselves, for example at the approach of death.

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With regard to the minister's own character and conduct, he pointed out that just as an accountant had a code of etiquette in his relations with his clients and his fellow accountants, so a minister must have a code of etiquette in his relations with his congregation and his fellow ministers. He could never, for example, claim that he was "*off duty*". He must always be available to those who needed him, when they needed him. The things he talked about, laughed about and joked about at any time showed the real depth of his spiritual life. In fact, it was true of the Unitarian minister (and increasingly true of other clergy, including the Roman Catholic) that office, title, prefix or uniform counted for hardly anything, compared with the man himself, his character, and his personal integrity.

"If our work is to have any standing, dignity or status among men, we must start with ourselves", he concluded.

THE RECEPTION

WHEN we came out of the Underground station it was to realise everything around was different from before. Notting Hill Gate has a "new look". Gone are many of the old landmarks like Lindsey Hall, and other nearby shops and buildings. Even Essex Church looks different. No longer can we describe it as we used to as "the church with the spire at the end of Palace Gardens Terrace". Repair work has lately been carried out and the spire taken down.

But once we were inside, in the brightly lit and attractively decorated hall then everything was as usual. About four o'clock there were the first arrivals, the Women's League were ready to serve tea, around the hall little groups gathered as of old, there were the friendly handshakes, warm-hearted greetings and reminiscencing.

When it was time for the brief formal proceedings we discovered Presidents can get lost, for on first call neither our own Arthur Vallance nor America's Dana Greeley could be found. In a few moments, though both were on the platform and were joined subsequently by Dr. Greeley's wife, Dr. and Mrs. Staples. Consultant to All Souls, Washington—both his father and grandfather were in the ministry, Mr. and Mrs. Qiton of Indianapolis, and Mr. L. Reynolds from Sydney, Australia. With a warm welcome to these visitors, proceedings ended, but not the conversation. That continued for somewhile. On these occasions there are so many friends to see; so much to talk about. Another Assembly had begun.

Postscript

Later in the evening, when the anniversary service was over, we were invited by Essex Church young people—"The Lindsey Club"—to return to the hall for an Assembly Supper. A large number of us responded and enjoyed the buffet supper provided and the further opportunity to talk. The proceeds, it was announced, would go to World Refugee Year and a first count of takings and expenses suggested that something like thirty pounds had been raised. An Assembly Supper was a welcome innovation and Essex Church young people deserve thanks for their excellent arrangements and congratulations on their initiative.

END OF ASSEMBLY REPORT FOR THIS ISSUE

The Reports

"THE INQUIRER" is indebted to the Revs. Donald Maw, Arthur Peacock and John Rowland, for the Assembly reports which appear in this issue.

The report of the Sunday School Association was prepared by the Rev. DUDLEY RICHARDS

BILL SINGH'S FAREWELL

By Margaret Barr

BILL was the eldest of the first group of children to attend the Khasrong Senior Basic School, already eighteen while the others' ages ranged from eleven to fifteen, and having come from a far distant part of the Khasi Hills where the dialect was so different as to be hardly intelligible, and being in many ways a bit of an odd fish at Khasrong, he was for some time treated with scorn and derision by some of the other children, especially

three of the girls. But he held his own and refused to be driven away and after three years here completed the senior course and was accepted for teacher training at the Government Training Centre.

When I got back from leave at the beginning of 1957 he was just finishing his training and since then, for nearly three years, he has been in charge of a little Junior Basic School in the next village to Kharang. During those years he has been constantly in and out of the Kharang Rural Centre, learning simple village medicine from Dran, teaching the boys basketry and generally playing the part of grown-up son to me. But a few weeks ago, on visiting his village during the winter holiday, he discovered that his family affairs and especially his mother's need of a home apart from a new son-in-law who was making her life a misery, necessitated his returning home as soon as possible. Moreover the Junior Basic School near his home has been run for the two years of its existence by someone who does not know the local dialect, Bill being as yet the only trained teacher from that area. He therefore applied for a transfer, which was readily granted, and on February 19th we had a farewell meeting to wish him god speed in his new sphere of service.

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It was all quite spontaneous and unprepared and when, after saying a few words myself, I asked whether anyone else would care to speak, I had not the least idea whether there would be any response. At once the oldest of the present batch of children, who came to school on my return from leave at the beginning of 1957, rose to his feet and made a delightful little speech. He said how helpful and encouraging Bill had been when they were raw new pupils, behaving like a big brother to them all and helping to make them feel at home here. One or two others followed, but the speech of the evening (apart from Bill's reply) was made by Phrien, the girl who had most mercilessly teased and tormented Bill when they were at school together and who is now my right hand in her four-fold capacity as weaving instructress, assistant nurse, teacher of the morning class of youngsters from the Kharang Junior School who have not yet passed the junior exam and supervisor of the new Junior Boarding Establishment.

She said how stupid they had been as school girls, unable to recognise his worth and how patiently Bill had endured all their teasing. She told us how near she and the other two girls I had sent to the Gandhi Ashram when I went home in 1956 had been to running away at first. The climate, the food, the work and the language were all different from anything they had been accustomed to and they were miserably home-sick. It was Bill who had saved the situation, running down to Gauhati (at his own expense, a 64-mile bus ride) whenever he could get away from his teacher-training work in Shillong, telling them that everyone who was of any use in the world had to fight against difficulties and learn to stand on their own feet, reminding them that I was trusting them and it was unthinkable that they should let me down. She said they would never forget and would always be grateful for his brotherly advice and encouragement which had saved them from doing something foolish that they would have regretted ever after.

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Bill then rose to reply and I wish this English report could in any way convey the graciousness, sincerity and charm of the simple Khasi speech he made. First he told the children of his early struggles to get education, overworked and under-fed for the sake of two hours' schooling a day, and of how Kharang had proved to be the land of heart's desire where he had received as much book-learning as his limited mental equipment could take in, so that now, after training at the Government Training Centre, he was able not only to earn a reasonable living as a teacher, but also, and even more important, to fulfil his life-long wish to pioneer education in his own area and so be instrumental in helping other boys and girls from that backward jungle area to have a fuller life than would otherwise be possible.

He spoke very beautifully of me and of the mother-son relationship that binds us, and of his undying gratitude for what I have done for him, adding that, though it was a hard wrench to go away after seven years of such close companionship, he knew that in going to work in his own area, he was doing what I wished as well as what he had always vowed to himself that he would do. He also pointed out that my hope for all the children passing through my school was that they should remain in rural work, no matter how much book-learning they got before leaving, thereby helping to raise the standard of life in every possible way for their fellow villagers, instead of running off to look for office jobs in towns. So he knew that, by going to work in his own area as a village teacher, he was doing exactly what would most please me.

From that he went on to talk about trustworthiness and the supreme importance of keeping promises, not only the spoken ones that others have witnessed, but perhaps even more those that we make only to the Dweller in the Innermost, as he did when he vowed to himself and his God that he would return to serve his own people when he felt himself sufficiently equipped to do so.

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Last of all he spoke about religion. He said, "You all know that Kong Burr is a Unitarian and I am a Presbyterian, but never in all the years we have been together has there been any discord between us. Every Sunday I have been free to go to my own church; never once has she said anything against the teaching of my church; never once has she told me in words what Unitarianism is. But I have not needed words. No one who comes here needs to be told what Unitarianism is for we see it in action in everything that Kong Burr says and does and is. No one who has been near to her can doubt that it is her love for God, the One Father of us all, that gives her strength to live the life she does, a life of service to some of His neglected children. Love for God and the service of man—that is Unitarianism".

Never in my life have I received so beautiful and moving a tribute, or so encouraging a testimonial to what I am trying to do at Kharang, and that from the one best qualified to know whether my efforts are succeeding or not.

God speed, dear Bill, in your new sphere of service, and may you some day have the joy of hearing a similar tribute from the lips of a pupil of yours.

A LAYMAN'S DIARY

APRIL 10 (Sunday). Start of British Summer Time. For most people, the arrival of B.S.T. means one hour's less sleep on the first day, but for those of us who have energetic small children it should mean, for once, one extra hour of supper; the 6 a.m. "action off" should not seem to happen until 7 a.m. So for the next few days we look forward to a little extra peace and quiet until David's internal chronometer adjusts itself.

In tonight's *Epilogue* on BBC religious television, Canon Roy McKay discussed the events leading up to the Conference in the light of what is happening in Africa at the moment. "The Conference," he said, "resulted from the action, not of bad men, but of good men following the accepted standards of their day". Earlier in the evening the BBC had shown us a film portrait by Denis Mitchell—a master of documentary—of the little South African town of Peppermount. The black people we saw were carefree and cheerful, most of them; the whites were prosperous, composed and kindly—and secure in their inner conviction that black Africans ("Bantu") belonged to an entirely separate childlike creation of humanity and could not be treated as equal human beings. Just ordinary decent people, the white folk looked and sounded.

But in South Africa today it is not enough for a white man to be just an ordinary decent person. Something more, something almost approaching sainthood, is required of him. As A. D. Lindsay said in *The Two Moralities* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1940), "In the modern of challenge or grace the situation says, 'Here is a man, a crying evil, a need! What can you do about it?' We are asked not to say 'Yes' or 'No' or 'I will' or 'I will not,' but to be inventive, to create, to discover

something new. The difference between ordinary people and saints is not that saints fulfil the plain duties which ordinary men neglect: the things saints do have not usually occurred to ordinary people at all: the ordinary man could not say 'No' or 'I will not' to the thought of such actions since he has not envisaged them".

In short, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" In our own stable country we are, in a way, lucky that the demands of sainthood do not press on us so insistently as they do in South Africa; if they did, can we say with any confidence that we would respond any more satisfactorily? I doubt it.

*

April 11. David woke us at 6 a.m., B.S.T., to tell us he had earache.

April 12. David woke us at 6 a.m., B.S.T., to tell us he had not got earache.

Our local theatre in the suburbs sometimes gets a new play for a week, just before it starts in the West End, and tonight we were able to see a preview of *A Passage to India*, which Miss Santha Rama Rau has made from E. M. Forster's novel published in 1924 (and still in print as a Penguin). This play is a remarkable achievement: all the main characters—Mr. Fielding, the liberal schoolmaster, Dr. Aziz, Miss Quested, Mrs. Moor, Professor Godbole—have been brought to life almost exactly as I visualised them when I re-read the novel recently. The play does not include all that is in the book; it ends with the trial scene, or rather with the empty, tatty little magistrates' court, after the trial is over, and Miss Quested has withdrawn her prosecution, and Dr. Aziz has been acquitted, and everyone has gone away—to nurse new frustrations and irritations, over and above the old ones which they had been trying, with goodwill and sincerity, to dispel.

Last night, at our monthly church Fellowship meeting, the visiting speaker, a retired Army officer with a wide knowledge of South-East Asia and India, told us that in 1960 there are more British residents and traders in India and Pakistan than there were, *even including the Army*, in 1939. The consoling thing about watching the play tonight was the feeling one had that the picture it gave of British attitudes in India in 1924 was now a matter of ancient history, and that a new and infinitely better relationship had now been achieved. When we read Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, twenty years hence, shall we have the same comforting feeling about relationships in Africa? Or will we then be seeing the fulfilment of the sad prophecy made in that book by Pastor Msimangu, "Maybe when *they* have turned to loving, *we* shall have turned to hating?"

Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Voting on Wednesday Evening at General Assembly

Sir: Can you elucidate the position of the Public Meeting on the Wednesday evening of the Annual Meeting? Above the "Order of Proceedings" was written a warning to delegates that they could not speak to more than one resolution. But it was not only delegates that were allowed to vote: the Secretary stated specifically that voting cards were not necessary. Many who were not delegates did in fact vote; there was no check on the door so that many of the voters may well have been unconnected with Unitarianism.

Surely therefore—unfortunately or not—none of the resolutions passed at the meeting can go out as deliberations of the General Assembly?

Cambridge. Yours, Victor C. Radmore.

(We regret that we cannot help our correspondent except that we understand the resolutions passed were sent to no one.—Ed.)

South Africa

Sir: If, as Rev. Meguse Retter says, "South Africa is two white dwarfs in the shadow of one black giant", its situation differs little from that of other countries, except that the dwarfs and giants are usually of the same colour. No country is without its dwarfs—political, religious, social, or merely economic—on whom an unstable conformity is imposed by its giant.

It is an extraordinary fact that, with all his achievements in such spheres as philosophy, art and the sciences, the all-conquering white man has achieved nothing in the political sphere more valid than what is sometimes called "government by the democratic majority". Let us admit that a majority is but a mathematical conception, and bears no relation to the rights or wrongs of the questions that are settled, or so it is claimed, by its use. A majority, as such, has no rights. What it has is access to the sanctions of the State, so that its demands can be enforced, if necessary. We are usually given to understand, however, that because one number is bigger than another, right may be distinguished from wrong by the counting of votes. That our religion also is not decided for us by this mathematical procedure is a little difficult to understand. Perhaps we—is it because we are white people?—subconsciously set limits to our own foolishness.

This is the sort of "democracy" that the white man, oblivious to the ceaseless political and economic strife that in his own countries can be traced to it, seeks to operate in backward countries. He is now finding, to his dismay, that its deficiences are thrown into ominous relief where the majority is black and the minority white. Nevertheless, what is valid for whites should be valid for blacks—if indeed it is valid at all. But is it?

It was the late C. H. Douglas who suggested that a valid democracy would be a system of government which secured every individual in the supremacy of his own (not somebody else's) affairs. Colonists in Africa, if not nearer home, suggest that he may have been right. If the white races had evolved such a democracy for themselves—if the status-selling of minorities by majorities was prevented by their Constitutions; if their Governments, as far as was practicable, ministered (that is really what they are paid for) to each individual as supreme in his own affairs—what a priceless heritage white rule could have bequeathed to both white and black. The coloured could have handed over the reins of administration to individuals of any colour, secure in the knowledge that the genuine democracy that he had established would have continued to secure him in the supremacy of his own affairs. As things are, the perversion of democracy that is embodied in majorities is likely to boomerang against those who sponsored it.

Mr. Retter implies that we, who live in glass houses, should be careful not to throw stones. We should be content rather, as he suggests, to advance the good in our own countries. The opportunities are always with us. Every time we connive at a majority decision, we are a party to the use of force. When our vote has a valid meaning—when it indicates what we want for ourselves that we are entitled to have, and not what we want for other people or at their expense, we shall have a social system that will recommend itself to others. Dwarfs and giants will find that they can live harmoniously side by side.

Dublin. Yours, Raymond Hannagan.

Dr. Hall's Books and Sermons

Sir: Some months ago I asked your readers to let me know if they would like to receive a list of book titles available for free distribution from the late Dr. Alfred Hall's library. Most of them were distributed in consequence, but a box of books has turned up which failed to get catalogued, and I am open to receive further applications.

Also Dr. Hall left a large number of sermons. Many of his friends might like to have one of his typed sermons as a memento, and if they would send a stamped 9-in. × 6-in. envelope, and state preference of subject (Unitarian teaching, religion and science, religion and history, science, ethics, biography), I would gladly send them.

Bankes Road, Parsonage, Altrincham, Cheshire. Yours, Arthur W. Vellacott.

"Unitarian Theology"

Sir: Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall, the Congregational minister, states he is appreciative of your "generosity in allowing him space of a whole page in *The Inquirer*" to criticise the "Essays in Unitarian Theology" issued by the Lindsey Press, but does not allow his "appreciation" to prevent him from making what seems to me, at least, to be a very superficial patronising and hostile evaluation of these essays.

The assumption made by many Unitarians that a Congregational minister's religious and theological outlook is necessarily, or even probably, "liberal and undogmatic" is by Dr. Nuttall's statements at once brought into doubt.

Dr. Nuttall states of the authors of these essays that "the discussion is carried on in a closed world of their own into which I do not know how to make an entry". Why he cannot make an entry is immediately disclosed in his following statements about "God's authority, demand, judgment, grace, forgiveness, love, self-disclosure, the Bible, worship, prayer, experience of divine redemption from evil", etc. etc., as apparently fundamental and axiomatic for Christian thought and theology. Dr. Nuttall is shocked that these dogmas are not the subject of this book, and states he is not clear what is!

It would need still another and very plain speaking essay in Unitarian theology to try to make clear to Dr. Nuttall that his dogmatic basis of Christian theology is to most Unitarian and other liberal Christian thinkers, far from "fundamental" or "self evident".

It would, however, be an essay in futility for Dr. Nuttall obviously together with, I fear, the great majority of dogmatic and illiberal Christian theologians live in a tightly closed, self-satisfied, mental and spiritual world of their own, and speak, theologically, a language not only utterly incomprehensible and untranslatable into common thought and speech, but equally so into truly liberal and undogmatic religious thought and language.

Liberals.

Yours, etc., H. W. Kendall.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

Muriel Hilton

"WHAT then is the vocation of the whole man? So far as I can make out his vocation is to be a creator, and if you ask me creator of what, I answer—a creator of real values. And if you ask me what motive can be appealed to, what driving power can be relied on to bring out this creative element in men and women, there is only one answer I can give, and I give it without hesitation—the love of beauty, innate in everybody, but suppressed, thwarted in most of us—a deep unsatisfied hunger which is rendering millions of lives utterly miserable at the present moment, though perhaps they haven't the faintest idea what is the matter with them."

A long while ago I wrote out that passage from Dr. L. P. Jack's book "The Education of the Whole Man". I often refer to it, for the words have become more meaningful with the passing of the years.

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It is a mistake to think as some do that the joy and inner satisfaction of creation is limited to the artists. Although there is little scope for the majority to find creative happiness in the manner in which they earn their living, there is more opportunity than there has ever been for the development of some art or craft in leisure hours. Art is not only fine painting and poetry, it can also be cooking, dress-making, wood-carving and a host of other activities. The way we look at our lives, the things we do can be creative or deadening.

A very homely illustration can be taken here. What a tedious, toilsome task daily cooking can be if those who eat the results do so without praise or interest, without expression of thanks. And how deadly cooking can be if the person preparing the food thinks it is a bore, a tedious daily routine. What a constant satisfaction it is to the woman who prepares food to know that it is appreciated, and indeed how much better the cooking becomes when others take an interest in it.

There is a great need in modern life for the stimulation of effort in the direction of self-expression in all the arts and crafts by which the humblest of us can express ourselves and in all

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"Will you make this Spring a memorable one for some refugee — because of the new chance in life you gave to them? Can you help one of those starved Algerian children, 'too weak to walk, tiny arms all bone', to run again? Or help a homeless family from Agadir to start afresh? You have probably helped World Refugee Year already: but may I ask you to give again with the generosity I know you would show if you saw the needs?"

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creation there is loving awareness which enhances all living. Even if there is no permanence in what we make there is joy in making and joy in remembering. We have the sense of something added to us. It is all too easy to feel hopeless, confronted as we are by such mighty forces of destruction, but all creative living helps to dispel the destructive tendencies in human nature. All whole, loving, outgoing personalities help to banish the misery and maladjustments of others. One creative, loving person can set another alight.

Fiona McLeod put in four words what he held to be all the dreams and spiritual efforts of the soul of man. The four words were, "To live in beauty". And in spite of so much that we deplore in modern life, that there is something we can all strive to do, whoever and wherever we are.

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There are times, rare it is true, when one has an experience of such unusual and satisfying happiness that for a long time after, one reflects upon all the factors that went to make it. What was the secret of it? How could it be maintained?

Recently, twelve of our congregation at Hastings went to another member's home to help sew into blankets for the refugees the innumerable squares we had all been knitting. Our hostess, a woman under four score years and ten than four-score years, for whom we all have unbounded admiration and who is in charge of our refugee work, had organised the work beforehand. As we entered her large, warm beautiful room overlooking the park we saw the little bundles of squares set out for us, complete with needles, wool and scissors. And work we did. So absorbed we were in what we were doing, that often a silence of unusual depth fell on the assembly. Now and again I glanced from my sewing and saw the busy hands, the happy groups the women made in the room, the blankets hanging from screens and chairs, all brimming with beauty and colour and tried to imprint the picture on my mind. After a couple of hours we were given tea with such a variety of our hostess's home-made confectionery that our admiration of her increased. She had prepared it with such apparent joy. We settled down again, the silence descending at intervals, and soon we were able to see something of the results of our work—the gloriously coloured blankets which were first to be exhibited at the church on Sunday, then despatched to the Oxford Committee for Refugees.

On the following Sunday we were all still full of the deep pleasure we had experienced at the "party", and though not expressed there was a feeling of togetherness, of true community.

The prayer of the Psalmist was certainly answered on that occasion—Let the beauty of our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands.

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These words were spoken by Edward Johnston at a lecture he gave to some students in Germany:—

> "Life is the thing we all want, and it is the desire for life that is behind all religion and all art. I do not care what curious the art belongs to or to what "school" as long as it is alive. I think that I can claim that mine is, as they are, the letters on the blackboard are alive. This is not due to myself, I am only a superior kind of motor or engine—it is due to the pen (which brings life to letters) and to all the life and the spirit of men before this. Our aim should be, I think, to make letters live—we can bring life to our poor letters—not merely for the sake of art, not to make advertisements of them, not for the sake of their beauty, but that men themselves may have more life."

THE SAMUEL JONES FUND

The income of the above fund is applied in augmentation of the salaries of such conscientious Dissenting Ministers as shall stand most in need of assistance, as the Trustees shall approve, preference being given to those who have been students of Manchester College, Oxford.

The Managers make grants annually in October. APPLICATIONS must, however, be in hand NOT LATER THAN JUNE 1st, 1960, and must be on a form obtained from the Secretary, HERBERT GIMSON, 46 Ladbroke Square, London, W.11.

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